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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In their statement (S/PRST/1989/16) of 27 May 1999, members of the Security Council expressed their alarm at the serious deterioration in the political, military and humanitarian situation in Somalia and their concern at the reports of increasing external interference in the country. They requested me to submit periodic reports on the situation in Somalia.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request. It covers developments since the last report on the situation in Somalia, submitted on 16 September 1997 (S/1997/715). In response to requests to relevant regional organizations to submit information on concrete efforts that have been undertaken or are under active consideration in the search for a peaceful solution to the situation in Somalia, information has been received from the League of Arab States (see annex I) and Ethiopia (see annex II).

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

A. Peacemaking efforts

3. The "Sodere Group" intended to hold a national reconciliation conference at Bossaso on 1 November 1997, and efforts were being made to secure the participation of Mohamed Ibrahim Egal and Hussein Mohamed Aidid, who had not joined the meeting of the 26 factions at Sodere, Ethiopia, which had formed the National Salvation Council.

4. However, Hussein Aidid and some of his supporters travelled to Cairo, where they joined with Ali Mahdi Mohamed and a number of other Somali faction leaders to attend a reconciliation meeting of Somali leaders. Declared open on 12 November 1997, the meeting was attended by representatives of the National Salvation Council and Hussein Aidid's group. On 22 December 1997, a joint agreement was signed by participants at the Cairo meeting, including Hussein Aidid and Ali Mahdi as Co-Chairmen. Under the agreement, a national reconciliation conference was planned at Baidoa in February 1998 but never took place.

5. To leaders, Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and General Aden Abdullahi Nur "Gabyow", refused to sign the agreement and left for Addis Ababa. There, in conjunction with some other leaders who had signed the agreement, they convened a meeting of the National Salvation Council, which proposed, without success, some changes to the agreement. Ethiopia blamed Egypt for "hijacking" the Sodere process and a national reconciliation conference has not taken place since then.

6. Somalia has been discussed in various international and regional forums during the period covered in the present report. The first ministerial meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Partners Forum, held in Rome on 19 and 20 January 1998, decided to establish a Committee of the IGAD Partners Forum to support the IGAD peace process in Somalia.

7. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), on several occasions in 1998, expressed grave concern that, in spite of the efforts of several actors, substantive progress was still lacking and called for redoubled efforts in the search for a peaceful settlement of the Somali crisis. Grave concern was also expressed over the increased flow of arms into Somalia. At its meeting last month at Algiers, OAU commended the efforts of the Standing Committee on Somalia and, inter alia, stressed the need for continued and close coordination in the efforts aimed at ending the conflict in Somalia.

8. At its seventeenth session, the Council of Ministers of IGAD, meeting at Djibouti on 14 and 15 March 1998, attributed the lack of progress in Somalia to the proliferation of parallel initiatives, a lack of the necessary resolve on the part of the faction leaders and insufficient humanitarian and development support from the international community. It reaffirmed the role of Ethiopia as the country mandated to lead the peace process in Somalia on behalf of IGAD. The international community was invited to adopt a new approach: the Somali peace process should be broadened, shifting the focus away from faction leaders to include representatives of civil society. In particular, the international community was invited to support preferentially those areas of Somalia whose leaders showed a commitment to peace (the so-called "peace dividend" approach). To reduce the danger of "parallel initiatives", IGAD proposed the creation of a mechanism, possibly through its Partners Forum, allowing other countries interested in the Somalia peace process to associate themselves with it. These proposals were endorsed by the IGAD heads of Government at a meeting which immediately followed the ministerial meeting.

9. The Liaison Group on Somalia, formed under the aegis of the IGAD Partners Forum to assist international actors in reaching a common position on Somalia, met for the first time at Addis Ababa on 12 June 1998 under the Chairmanship of Italy. Those attending included IGAD Member States, donors, including the European Commission, and the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) as well as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Another consultative body, the Standing Committee on Somalia, whose membership is open to IGAD and its Partners Forum Liaison Group members and other interested States and organizations, was formed and met on 5 November 1998 at Addis Ababa under the chairmanship of Ethiopia. Since then, the Liaison Group and the Standing Committee have continued to meet approximately every two months at Addis Ababa at about the same time.

10. From 1 to 5 December 1998, a fact-finding mission of the Standing Committee visited Hargeisa, Garowe and Bossaso. It intends to visit cities in southern Somalia when conditions permit. In the Standing Committee meeting of 29 July 1999, Djibouti outlined a peace plan. The plan contained both cultural and political elements. The cultural element incorporated a programme scheduled to take place between January and June 2000. The Djibouti proposals also involved the establishment of a representative council based on region rather than clan, with one third of the seats reserved for civil society. The council itself would be composed of two chambers: one reserved for elders and the other for political representatives. The council would have a three-year mandate to prepare a transitional constitution and a referendum. An executive council was also proposed to act as the interim government. The Djibouti representative emphasized that the international community should play an important role by providing technical and financial support ab initio. The plan was welcomed by other members of the Standing Committee who agreed to study it.

11. Ministers of the European Union (EU) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries in the ACP-EU Council, meeting at Brussels on 29 June 1999, considered Somalia. They expressed the view that only a process leading to a Somali-driven national reconciliation conference inclusive of all geographic areas and all segments of Somali society, could lead to national and international acceptance of a transitional government. They reaffirmed that European Development Fund resources would be made available to Somalia once it could adhere to the Lomé IV Convention.

12. In his 28 October 1998 letter to me, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, reported that the Council of the League had adopted a resolution calling on its member States to provide immediate financial assistance in order to support the implementation of the Cairo joint agreement. He expressed his gratitude for the continuing work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies in Somalia, and asked me to find ways of supporting the Mogadishu administration, together with the preparations for the convening of the national reconciliation conference envisaged in the Cairo joint agreement at the earliest possible juncture.

13. The Organization of the Islamic Conference, meeting in Burkina Faso from 28 June to 2 July 1999, called for an international peace and reconciliation conference on Somalia, to be held as soon as possible.

B. Internal situation

"Somaliland"

14. North-West Somalia/"Somaliland" continues to enjoy relative peace, although some skirmishes, which in most instances are not political in nature, are reported from time to time. On 12 October 1997, the leader of "Somaliland", Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, announced a deployment of his troops along "Somaliland's" border with Ethiopia. He accused Ethiopia of providing training and equipment to 300 militia, who allegedly came from the Sool region with the intention of destabilizing "Somaliland". There has been some tension between "Somaliland" and the "administration" in North-East Somalia/"Puntland" over administrative

control of the Sool and Sanaag regions. On 21 February 1999, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal warned "Puntland" against deploying to Sool 100 men who had been recruited from Sool and trained at Garowe for police work.

15. The previous hard-line position taken by the "Somaliland" leadership on the issue of secession of the territory appears to have softened. Mr. Egal told my Representative, David Stephen, on 24 November 1997, that, given the peaceful environment established there, "Somaliland" should be given special status as an autonomous territory until such time as the leaders of "the South" were in a position to negotiate a mutually acceptable future. Such a status, he felt, could allow "Somaliland" access to international financial institutions as well as to other international organizations, such as the International Telecommunication Union.

16. Nevertheless, Mr. Egal has on occasion continued to demand sovereign status for "Somaliland". In his letter of 3 January 1998, he suggested that France, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States of America should form a panel to organize the formation of a state in the Somali-inhabited territories in the Horn of Africa. Not to do this, he claimed, would make any call for the territorial integrity of Somalia unrealistic; as an alternative, "Somaliland" demands recognition of its sovereignty and resents vehemently any equation of itself with the factions of Somalia.

17. During a visit to Egypt and Yemen, between the end of February and 12 March 1999, Mr. Egal proposed that "Somaliland" should assist the clans in the "South" in reaching peace and subsequently enter into negotiations on an appropriate formula for reuniting the country. While his proposal reportedly resulted in some tension with hard-line elements in "Somaliland" adamantly opposed to any dialogue with the rest of Somalia, the reactions of some of the neighbouring countries have been positive. The Yemeni Prime Minister was delighted about what he viewed as the softening position of Mr. Egal, and thought that with "Puntland" joining hands with "Somaliland", the first step could be taken towards the resuscitation of Somalia. At Cairo, the Deputy Assistant Minister for Bilateral African Relations described the meetings with Mr. Egal to my Representative as positive and said that Egypt considered that Mr. Egal had a role to play in reuniting the country. Between 27 June and 2 July 1999, Mr. Egal paid a visit to Nairobi at the invitation of President Daniel Arap Moi and had several meetings with him.

"Puntland"

18. On 20 February 1998, Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf told my Representative that his priority was to achieve an administrative structure for the North-East regions at the local level as a constituent unit of a future Somali state, and as the basis for future participation in any national reconciliation conference. Subsequently, the Majerteens, the majority clan in North-East Somalia, held a meeting, together with other smaller clans, at Garowe from 25 February to 4 March 1998. The meeting approved the aim of a single regional administration and chose Garowe as the venue for a constitutional meeting. A follow-up meeting from 10 to 12 March 1998, which included delegates from Sool and Sanaag, agreed to give the name "Puntland State" to the new regional administration. The Garowe constitutional conference elected Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf "President" of

"Puntland State" and Mohamed Abdi Hashi, Chairman of United Somali Party/Somali Salvation Alliance as "Vice-President" on 23 July 1998. The meeting endorsed an interim charter and established a 69-member parliament. The result of the election was challenged by General Mohamed Abshir Musse, the Chairman of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front and Boqor Abdullahi Boqor Musse, a Majerteen traditional leader, both of whom had competed with Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf for presidency.

Mogadishu

19. Following the Cairo joint agreement of 22 December 1997, Ali Mahdi, Osman Hassan Ali "Atto" and Hussein Aidid returned to Mogadishu at the end of January 1998. As it became clear that the national reconciliation conference scheduled for Baidoa on 15 February 1998 would not take place, they embarked on an effort to set up an administration for Benadir region (Mogadishu). Their efforts were encouraged by the Egyptian Special Envoy for Somalia.

20. Progress towards the formation of such an administration was beset by a number of problems, including the claim of Hussein Aidid to be "President" of Somalia as well as the opposition to Ali Mahdi within his Modulod clan. The opposition, which was led by Hussein Haji Bod and Hagi Musse Sudi "Yallahow", both former aides of Ali Mahdi, later included Osman "Atto".

21. On 5 July 1998, 40 Somali leaders left Mogadishu for Libya, to join prayers on the birthday of the Holy Prophet Mohamed. They returned to Mogadishu on 11 July 1998 accompanied by the Libyan Envoy for Somalia. Colonel Muamar Ghaddafi reportedly urged them to finalize the establishment of an administration for Benadir region and to reopen the sea and airports, and promised to provide equipment and six months' financing for a police force for Mogadishu. While Ali Mahdi and Hussein Aidid promised that the Benadir administration would come into being on 18 July 1998, Musse Sudi and other opposition groups claimed that consultations were incomplete and that any attempt to put in place an administration would result in bloody confrontation. There was also a division over the representation of some clans, including minorities.

22. On 3 August 1998, Ali Mahdi and Hussein Aidid announced the formation of an administration for Benadir region. A 50-person Supreme Council was set up to oversee an administrative body for the region. This body was to be led by Hussein Ali Ahmed, a businessman who was named "Governor". On 6 August 1998, Ali Mahdi stated that the seaport had been reopened. Abdi Hassan Awale "Qaybdid", was named Chief of a police force. However, Osman "Atto", Musse Sudi and Hussein Bod opposed the claim that the Benadir administration had been formed. On 10 August 1998, Musse Sudi fired at a ship to prevent its approach to the seaport.

23. For a few months, the administration offered some hope. However, the political situation, especially in North Mogadishu, degenerated. Tension, banditry and intermittent clan fighting increased after March 1999, and fighting erupted within the Wabudan sub-clan of Ali Mahdi's Modulod clan. The residence of the "Governor" was attacked, prompting a retaliatory attack on Musse Sudi's residence. The Mogadishu police appeared to have disintegrated over its

inability to curb intra-clan violence. However, Benadir administration leaders viewed non-payment of salaries, after Libyan support was suspended, as the reason for the disbandment of the police force.

24. The vacuum created by the collapse of the Benadir administration in South Mogadishu was filled by various Islamic Sharia courts that emerged to maintain law and order. These courts, with the support of businessmen, started disbanding the various roadblocks that faction leaders had put in place to extort money.

25. Ali Mahdi left Mogadishu for Egypt on 23 April 1999 for medical treatment, reportedly disillusioned about his leadership of the Modulod clan. Mohamed Hussein Addow was appointed interim Chairman of the Modulod faction. Ali Mahdi told my Representative at Cairo on 30 June 1999 that he intended to return to Mogadishu within weeks to re-establish the Benadir administration and to open the airport and seaport. He said that a national reconciliation conference should be held as soon as possible. Hussein Aidid returned to Mogadishu on 13 July 1999. He also told my Representative that he intended to re-establish the Benadir administration and the police force.

Hiraan region: Belet-Weyne Conference

26. The Pan-Hawiye conference, which began on 19 November 1998, brought together approximately 400 intellectuals, politicians, religious leaders, and representatives of women's and youth groups. Observers from other clans and regions of Somalia were also present. The meeting was reported to have resolved the differences between the Abgal and Murusade clans, on the one hand, and between the Habr-Gedir and the Hawadle on the other. In a statement issued on 26 February 1999, nine traditional leaders announced agreement on a 10-point plan, including the formation of a committee to take the process further. They announced that they intended to move the meeting into a second phase to discuss the political future of the country. At that stage, the Conference Committee intended to make contact with other Somali clans. However, the meeting ended in June 1999 in confusion, with two different persons claiming to have been elected chairman of the Somali Consultative Council, which was established by the conference. Then, a group at Mogadishu claimed to have commenced a preparatory stage of a second phase of a Pan-Hawiye conference now to be held at Mogadishu.

"Jubaland"

27. On 8 May 1998, the Harti militia of General Mohamed Hersi Siad "Morgan" succeeded in repelling an attack on the Somali Patriotic Movement by pushing the combined Habr-Gedir and Marehan militia back to Kamsuma, about 90 kilometres from Kismayo. The Kamsuma bridge, which used to be the only all-weather link between Kismayo and Mogadishu, was blown up. On 6 January 1999, at least 60 people, including civilians, were killed and about 80 people reportedly injured, in fighting which saw the Marehan/Habr-Gedir side briefly entering Kismayo. On 11 June 1999, General "Morgan" and his militia were pushed out of Kismayo, bringing an end to his six-year hold on the city. The operation, led by General Ahmed Warsame among others, was reported by the victors as having been carried out by "Allied Somali Forces". There have also been intermittent clashes in Ras

Kamboni in the Lower Juba region, between the Al-Itihad Islamic Organization and Maqabul militiamen of the Absame clan.

Bay and Bakool regions

28. Since the occupation of the Baidoa area by the late General Aidid on 17 September 1995, guerrilla warfare continued to be waged by the Rahanwein Resistance Army against the militia of Hussein Aidid. On 6 June 1999, the Rahanwein Resistance Army finally succeeded in driving Hussein Aidid's militia out of Baidoa. Some Somalis have claimed, however, that Ethiopian forces crossed the border and actively fought on the side of the Rahanwein Resistance Army. Both Ethiopia and the Rahanwein Resistance Army have denied the charges.

Other regions: Gedo, Lower and Middle Shabelle

29. The Gedo region had been relatively peaceful until 14 March 1998, when the Al-Itihad Islamic Organization engaged the Somali National Front led by General Omar Haji Mohamed "Masale" in a successful bid to control El-Wak District. About 23 combatants were reportedly killed while many were injured. By 5 August 1998, however, the Marehan clan appeared to have settled the rift between Al-Itihad and General Omar Haji Mohamed "Masale".

30. On 8 April 1999, at Belet-Hawa in Gedo region, the self-proclaimed Chairman of the Somali National Front, the Bardere District Commissioner, and two others were assassinated in what appeared to be a power struggle within the Somali National Front. Then on 21 April 1999, the militia of another member of the clan, who claimed to have succeeded the assassinated Somali National Front Chairman, attacked the militia of General Omar Haji who had signed the Addis Ababa agreement of 1993 as Chairman of the Somali National Front at Burdhubo town. Ten people were reportedly killed and 16 wounded before the Burale militia retreated to their bases at Belet-Hawa. There have been persistent allegations of Ethiopian troop movements within the region. The United Nations Political Office for Somalia has not been in a position to establish the veracity of these reports.

Merka

31. Merka, until recently a place enjoying relative peace, had begun to attract a number of aid agencies, which established themselves in the town after relocating from Mogadishu. However, the situation has deteriorated since April 1999.

C. Role of women and minority groups

32. Women and minority groups in Somalia have continued to express concern over the lack of law and order in the country. On 1 June 1999, the Chairperson of a Somali NGO, Save Somali Women and Children, submitted a petition on behalf of 120 women to my Representative for transmission to the Security Council. The petition noted that Somali women have traditionally been excluded from politics and carry the main burden of the suffering in Somalia. In particular, because of the situation within IGAD, they felt that the United Nations may be best

placed to help all Somalis to restore their government, paying particular attention to the role women should play. At a meeting held in Nairobi from 21 to 25 June 1999, a delegation of representatives of five women's groups from different regions of Somalia established a campaign for Somali women's political participation. Other Somali women have been holding monthly vigils at Nairobi in support of peace.

33. My Representative has also been meeting with several spokespersons for minority groups in Somalia, including the Chairmen of the Somali African Muki Organization, and the Somali National Union as well as the Sultan of the Jiddo, who emphasized the exclusion of minorities from the political process and the serious discrimination suffered by minorities in different parts of Somalia.

34. On 14 July 1999, Abdulkadir Mohamed Aden "Zoppe", the leader of the Digil and Mirifle people, issued a statement in which he called for the establishment of an international war crimes tribunal for Somalia, inter alia, to investigate and punish Hussein Aidid and his militia, who, he claimed, had carried out ethnic cleansing on the territory of the Digil and Mirifle people.

D. Allegations of arms flows into Somalia

35. In his letter of 31 March 1998, Mr. Egal said that the neighbouring countries should be told in unmistakable terms to stop giving arms and ammunition to the warring factions in Somalia. In his second letter of 8 August 1998, he deplored the fact that, at a time when the reservoir of ammunition left over from the cold war period was drying up and the warlords were no longer able to terrorize the population, new supplies appeared to be arriving in Somalia. He called for the arms embargo against Somalia to be enforced.

36. There have been claims by Somalis that Eritrea has been shipping arms and fighters of the Oromo Liberation Front into Somalia. In January 1999, at least two flights arrived at Balidogle from Assab, Eritrea, and it was alleged that the flights carried arms. There were also reports of further arms deliveries by sea at Merka in mid-February and early May 1999, and at Faax in mid-June 1999. It was also widely reported that together with the arms, Oromo Liberation Front fighters disembarked at Merka and Faax. On 31 March 1999, Ali Mahdi accused Ethiopia of providing arms to his opponents, notably to Hussein Haji Bod. Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf wrote to me on 6 May 1999 condemning the troops and arms that were allegedly arriving in Somalia from Eritrea. In mid-July 1999, officials of the Somali Consultative Council issued statements in which they condemned the presence of Oromo Liberation Front fighters in Somalia. They drew attention to what they considered to be a danger of a degeneration of security in Somalia, warning that the entire region was likely to be destabilized. On 8 April 1999, Hussein Aidid, Ali Mahdi and General Omar Haji wrote to me claiming that Ethiopia had not only exported arms into Gedo region but also continued to occupy Somali territory. They asked the Security Council to request Ethiopia to remove its troops from Somalia. UNPOS has neither the mandate nor the capacity to verify these reports. Both Ethiopia and Eritrea have denied any involvement in arms shipments into Somalia.

III. WORK OF THE UNITED NATIONS

37. Since my last report to the Security Council, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Kieran Prendergast, has convened on four occasions ambassadorial meetings of external actors on Somalia, on 7 October 1997, 16 June 1998, 15 December 1998 and 13 April 1999. They were attended by members of the Council, countries that have undertaken peacemaking initiatives, and relevant regional and subregional organizations. The meetings offered an opportunity for an informal exchange of views and coordination of initiatives on Somalia. It was suggested that such meetings take place more frequently than in the past, and the Under-Secretary-General has undertaken to convene them three times a year, or more frequently if need be.

38. I visited the Horn of Africa region between 29 April and 10 May 1998, and consulted on Somalia with the leaders of Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya and Eritrea. The then President of Djibouti, Hassan Guled Aptidon, expressed the views of most of the leaders when he called for a halt to what he described as "political tourism" of Somali leaders, in which they go to various capitals to sign documents which are not honoured. He said he would like all future reconciliation efforts to take place inside Somalia. At Nairobi, I had a meeting with external actors involved with Somalia, including the ambassadors of Member States and representatives of international organizations and non-governmental organizations. At my request, Mohamed Sahnoun, my Special Envoy in Africa, met a wide range of Somali leaders at Nairobi.

39. I asked Under-Secretary-General Prendergast to visit Nairobi in November 1998 to assess the prospects for peace in Sudan and Somalia. On Somalia, he exchanged views with President Daniel Arap Moi and Foreign Minister Bonaya Godana at Nairobi and met the Italian Special Envoy for Somalia, a delegation of the European Commission and a wide range of Somali faction leaders or their representatives, as well as leaders of Somali civil society, including women. In addition, he exchanged views with other external actors on Somalia, including heads of United Nations agencies and programmes, and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Under-Secretary-General Prendergast reported that the Kenyan authorities were supportive of the IGAD "building-block" approach as the way forward in Somalia, and that they were optimistic that the Standing Committee could assist the international community in speaking with one voice on the Somali peace process.

40. A common strand in Under-Secretary-General Prendergast's discussions with his Somali interlocutors was a strong feeling that the days of the "warlords" were over. Most of them called for a renewed United Nations effort to disarm militia members in the country. However, there was less disagreement on the way forward in the peace process. While many supported the "building-block" approach, some expressed the fear that it could lead to unsustainable "emirates" and/or to many "presidents" in an absurd fragmentation of the country, ultimately reaching as far down as the district if not the village level. Under-Secretary-General Prendergast emphasized my continued interest and that of the Security Council in finding a solution to the Somali problem, and assured the Somali leaders of continuing commitment of the United Nations to a political solution. At the same time, he stressed to them that the onus for peace rested

with Somalis themselves, and that members of the international community could only assist them in those efforts.

41. As the Council is aware, following submission of my report dated 16 September 1997 (S/1997/715), I appointed David Stephen as my Representative for Somalia as well as head of UNPOS. With the approval of the Security Council, a professional staff member has been added to UNPOS, which continues to be based at Nairobi. This has enabled UNPOS to enhance its briefing and reporting role, and in particular to improve its contacts with Somali leaders in Somalia. UNPOS staff have, during the period covered by the present report, made visits to all parts of the country, ensuring regular contacts and dialogue with all sectors of opinion inside Somalia. My Representative has also paid several consultation visits both to the capitals of Governments and to the headquarters of regional organizations that are involved in the peace process in Somalia. These efforts have helped to improve the flow of information among external actors, and have also enhanced understanding of the need for a uniformity of approach in fostering peace in Somalia, in an environment previously characterized by a multiplicity of approaches and initiatives.

IV. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

42. The United Nations agencies distinguish three different operational environments within Somalia: "zones of crisis", "zones of transition" and "zones of recovery". Each of these environments requires different humanitarian and rehabilitation strategy, and distinct types of external assistance. Integral to the analysis is the need to address five fundamental issues: (a) chronic food insecurity; (b) population displacement; (c) collapse of social services and infrastructure; (d) lack of good governance and associated security; and (e) the recurrence of natural disasters and lack of emergency preparedness. In zones of crisis, the emphasis is on ensuring better food security, provision of basic and life-saving social services, and assistance to community-level capacity-building. In zones of transition, greater focus is placed on the latter. In zones of recovery, the emphasis is on providing technical support for good governance and support to capacity-building in the economic and social sectors.

43. As outlined in the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for 1999, the main objective of the United Nations is to prevent the current situation in the South from developing into famine and to continue the groundwork for establishing stability, self-reliance and security in the North. In order to meet these objectives the United Nations has adopted a number of sectoral interventions, including in the areas of food security, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, education and public administration. In addition, there are a number of cross-cutting interventions to ensure programme coherence and protection of civilian populations, including the promotion and protection of human rights, and inter-agency planning and coordination. It is envisaged that if the programme is fully implemented it will benefit about two thirds of the population. The 1999 Consolidated Appeal presents the programme in detail, outlining the priority requirements: $65.7 million for humanitarian activities, and $29.3 million for rehabilitation and recovery activities. Emergency relief

activities, targeting over one million persons at risk, have been reasonably well funded, while rehabilitation and recovery programmes have not.

44. The implementation of a humanitarian and rehabilitation strategy for Somalia requires the efforts of a number of key actors ranging from international organizations, including eight United Nations agencies (UNDP, the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and some 40 NGOs, as well as local communities, administrations and national NGOs. The implementing partners of the United Nations include the following international NGOs: Action Contre La Faim, Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development, African Medical and Research Foundation, European Committee for Agricultural Training, Coordinating Committee of the Organization for Voluntary Service, Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli, International Medical Corps, InterSos Humanitarian Organization for Emergency, Mediche hulp aan de derde wereld (Health for all in the third world), Mercy International, Médicins Sans Frontières - Spain, Netherlands and Belgium, Muslim-Aid-UK, Norwegian Church Aid, Swedish Church Relief, Trocaire and World Vision. In cooperation with the partners of the Somalia Aid Coordination Body, overall coordination of humanitarian aid is undertaken by the office of the United Nations resident and humanitarian coordinator for Somalia.

45. Approximately two thirds of the United Nations staff working on Somalia (international and national) are located inside the country and mainly concentrated in the northern regions. For the purposes of maintaining a "cross-border" operation into the unstable South and Central areas and to provide overall coordination and programme support, the operational headquarters of most international organizations remain at Nairobi.

46. The effects of the continuing internal armed conflict upon the population have been compounded by extensive flooding in the southern regions followed by drought in most areas of Somalia. Severe food insecurity and disease, including cholera, have put one million persons at risk in the South, while in the North water and pasture shortage has dramatically depleted livestock, the resource base for most of the population.

47. The 1997-1998 floods in the southern region were the worst in decades and affected the lives of nearly one million Somalis, killing over 2,000 people in the acute phase of the emergency. In support of community responses, United Nations agencies and NGOs engaged in a massive relief operation. In the first phase, flood victims were supplied with basic survival items, including food rations, blankets, plastic sheeting, sandbags and cooking utensils. A second phase of the operation was planned for the rehabilitation of rudimentary services, including safe water and sanitation, agricultural infrastructure and for strengthening local health units to address major health problems. The planned follow-up was realized only marginally, however, due to the paucity of funding - in marked contrast to funding for the first phase - thereby making these areas of chronic disaster more vulnerable for the next crisis. A food

crisis accompanied by drought soon followed, beginning in the last quarter of 1998, just one year after the floods.

48. By the end of 1998, food insecurity and deterioration in health conditions were rife in central and southern Somalia due to the conflict and climate. The crisis continued as of mid-1999. Unusual population displacement, the most obvious sign of severe stress, had begun by November 1998. Sedentary farmer households began to move from the worst areas of Bay and Bakool (normally the breadbasket of Somalia) to other areas in search of food, better security and water. Over 40,000 persons moved to Gedo, Lower Shabelle, Middle Juba and Mogadishu. The communities are particularly vulnerable to outbreaks of communicable diseases, notably measles, malaria and diarrhoeal diseases, such as cholera. After the first confirmed cases of cholera in early December 1998, by the end of February 1999 there were over 3,000 cases and nearly 200 deaths reported. By May 1999, the situation had stabilized.

49. In the southern and central regions, over one million people are facing serious food shortages and 300,000 of them are currently in need of food aid. Their long-term food security situation is alarming and likely to deteriorate as a result of ongoing insecurity and poor prospects for the current harvest. The number of people requiring humanitarian assistance is therefore likely to increase. In response, United Nations agencies and NGOs have continued the large cross-border operation from Kenya, delivering urgently needed humanitarian supplies, including food aid, medicines and shelter. Since January 1999, nearly 13,500 tons of relief food have been distributed by WFP and CARE, benefiting over 700,000 people at Bay, Bakool, Gedo, Hiran, Middle Juba and Lower Shabelle regions. UNICEF and its partner agencies have distributed over 2,600 tons of "supermix" (a nutritious blend of corn and sugar), benefiting about 200,000 children. Some 80,000 children received vaccination against measles together with vitamin A supplementation. Over 27 water sources were rehabilitated, benefiting over 100,000 people at Bay, Bakool, Gedo, Middle Shabelle and Hiran.

50. In the effort to support farming communities in the South, United Nations agencies and NGOs completed a major seed distribution by the end of March 1999, the beginning of the primary planting season of 1999. On 6 July 1999, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Somalia Aid Coordination Body concurrently issued a donor alert for southern and central Somalia, requesting for US$ 17.5 million and covering the period from 1 July to 31 December 1999. Over 1,700 tons of seeds were distributed to farmers of Bay and Bakool regions in southern Somalia. In the North, successive failures of rains resulted in diminished pasture and lack of groundwater. Up to 50 per cent of livestock died in hard-hit areas. An inter-agency response was established by March 1999 to support communities through targeted food relief, water trucking, and rehabilitation of water sources. The arrival of rains in May 1999 and the lifting of the ban on imports of livestock from the Horn by some Gulf States helped the situation in the North, though there is still a very large need for rehabilitation work and disaster preparedness in this stable area.

51. Geographically, the areas experiencing recovery are mostly in the northern part of Somalia, where approximately one third of the total population lives. The economy in the North has demonstrated surprising resilience, with expanding interregional and export-oriented trade. The ban imposed on the importation of

Somali livestock from the Horn to some Gulf countries had a very negative impact on the economy. Consequently, the emerging local administrations in the North-West ("Somaliland") and North-East ("Puntland") suffered from lack of export tax revenues. Nevertheless, trade has continued to develop. The port of Berbera has become the most active Somali seaport and the second most important seaport for Ethiopia after Djibouti. Similarly, such airports as those at Hargeisa, Berbera and Bossaso provide an important source of revenue for local authorities and also encourage economic development. Nevertheless, the stability of these areas is fragile. Regions of recovery still need much support to build their capacities in order to sustain and improve upon their achievements since the end of the civil war.

52. United Nations projects in the North have been designed to give essential support towards improving administrative capacities and private economic expansion. Training programmes have been provided for local administrative structures, assistance given to urban planning and management as well as to road repair and sanitation. United Nations agencies, working closely with international NGOs and local partners, have succeeded with numerous small, self-sustaining projects, particularly in the urban centres.

53. The security of humanitarian activities continues to be a grave cause for concern. On 26 January 1999, Dr. Manmohan Singh Boghal, a Kenyan citizen working for Terra Nuova, was murdered in a remote village between Bardera and Garbahare towns in Gedo region by men believed to be working with him. Dr. Boghal had been involved in vaccination programmes against the rinderpest disease. The killers stole project money and equipment. The Somalia Aid Coordination Body recommended the suspension of all rehabilitation and development activities in Gedo region as local authorities, who apparently know the culprits, have been unable to bring them to justice.

54. On 20 March 1999, Deena Umbarger, a United States citizen employed by a non-governmental organization, United Methodist Committee on Relief, was killed close to the Kenya-Somali border. Ms. Umbarger had planned to conduct a humanitarian assessment mission in Somalia.

55. An Italian national, Dr. Stefano Sotgia, employed as a veterinarian by the Italian organization Terra Nuova, was kidnapped on 16 April 1999 at Hagar, about 180 kilometres West of Kismayo. The kidnapping was understood to be linked to accusations that Terra Nuova had not been providing enough services and operations in the area. The kidnappers demanded $100,000 in ransom for the release of the aid worker. The Somalia Aid Coordination Body condemned this kidnapping and called for his immediate release. He was finally released on 9 May 1999.

56. On 18 April 1999, firing was reported in and around the compound of the non-governmental organization Action Contre la Faim at Merka. In March 1999, a death threat letter in the form of a Fatwa had been issued against the former WHO country director on the basis of a number of unsubstantiated allegations. The United Nations designated official, as a precautionary measure, relocated United Nations international staff members from Merka on 21 April 1999. The attempt by the dominant political clan in the area to revamp the local administration has yet to bear fruit.

V. OBSERVATIONS

57. Despite persistent security threats and rising distribution costs caused by clan conflict, mines and other problems, the United Nations agencies and their humanitarian partners continue to deliver food aid to a high proportion of the most affected areas and to most settlements known to have incorporated displaced families. However, in areas threatened by sporadic armed conflict, including several major urban areas (Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa), and in parts of the Bay, Bakool and Hiraan regions, aid delivery could not be maintained at requisite levels.

58. Greater investment is needed to strengthen local community capacities and resilience to meet the demands of man-made and natural emergencies. In the more stable areas in the north, where aid agencies have a more permanent presence, emphasis should continue to be placed on capacity-building, in close collaboration with local administrations. The need for international humanitarian relief aid is demonstrably less where such rehabilitation investments have been made.

59. "Loud" emergencies in Somalia have been met by substantial short-term responses from the donor community. However, the operational capacity of humanitarian agencies has gradually been eroded, primarily owing to inadequate donor support for medium-term rehabilitation measures. For United Nations agencies, this is shown by the weak donor response to the 1999 Consolidated Appeal, which was severely prioritized and focused in response to donor wishes. As a result, the capacity of the agencies to provide efficient, effective humanitarian relief has been weakened, making response to future crises ever more difficult. Moreover, inadequate medium-term funding reduces the ability of humanitarian agencies to provide crucial, if more mundane, activities related to disaster prevention and the building of social resilience.

60. Such longer-term support is a prerequisite for any agency to be able to maintain its staff and its presence. For example, after the extreme floods of 1997 and 1998, it was clear that humanitarian agencies had not been able to do nearly enough to help rehabilitate the water sources and irrigation infrastructure fundamental to improving water access and strengthening disaster prevention. Another direct effect of inadequate medium-term funding has been the decline in coverage by non-governmental organizations in central and southern Somalia, which in turn has led to insufficient actors in the field able to work with communities in crisis. Even in the north, the decline in funds has hindered United Nations assistance in building local capacity to, in turn, respond to natural disasters such as drought. In addition, the absence of major rehabilitation work hampers efforts to encourage the return of refugees into the stable areas of Somalia.

61. Little or no development has taken place in Somalia for 10 years. Indeed, the country's development process has gone into reverse. Most children receive no health care or education; two generations have had no access to formal education. Life expectancy at birth is surely lower than the sub-Saharan average of 51 years. On almost all development indicators, Somalia ranks among the poorest and most deprived countries in the world. Virtually all the infrastructure of government – from buildings and communications facilities to

furniture and office equipment – has been looted. All government archives and records, libraries, files and museums have been totally destroyed. In most of the country, there are no police, judiciary or civil service. Communications, apart from private satellite and cellular telephones and radio links, are non-existent. Electricity is not available on a public basis, but only to those who can afford generators. There is no postal service. The economy is in dire straits. Exports of agricultural products, such as bananas, have plummeted. The ban imposed by some countries in the Gulf region on the import of live animals from the Horn of Africa as a result of last year's epidemic of Rift Valley Fever has now been lifted. However, while it remained in force, it caused economic hardship, deprived local administrations in the north of much-needed export tax income and led, through over-grazing, to serious environmental damage. Some natural resources, such as fish, are being exploited, mainly by foreigners, without regulation or monitoring.

62. In both informal and formal discussions of the Security Council, member States have expressed concern about the increasingly evident effects of the lack of a functioning central government in Somalia. Somalia is being seen as a "black hole" where the absence of law and order is attracting criminals and subversives. The Prime Minister of Yemen told my Representative that his Government was concerned about refugee flows from Somalia. He expressed fears that Somalia was being used as a transit-point for the trafficking of narcotic drugs and as a haven for terrorists. President Moi of Kenya called on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to repatriate tens of thousands of Somali refugees living in north-eastern Kenya. He accused the Somalis of abusing Kenyan hospitality by smuggling arms into the country. To worsen the situation, a Somali militia group disarmed a Kenyan platoon on 1 July 1999 and stole its equipment. Most of the stolen goods were returned after the Government of Kenya threatened punitive action against the perpetrators. A batch of fake Somali shillings, with an estimated value and $4 million, arrived in Somalia on 9 and 10 April 1999, followed by a second batch, worth about $5 million, on 8 June 1999. As a result, the value of the Somali shilling fell from about 7.5 shillings to the dollar to over 10,000 shillings to the dollar. There are now four different Somali shillings in circulation in Somalia.

63. As a country without a national government, Somalia remains unique. The functions that states perform, such as the provision of social services, including health and education, the regulation, for example, of the movement of goods and persons, control of the environment, airspace and coasts, and so on, as well as the representation of the Somali people in intergovernmental and international fora, are absent, notwithstanding the fact that administrations in some parts of the country, notably in north-western Somalia ("Somaliland") and north-east Somalia ("Puntland"), have begun to provide some basic services to their people.

64. Somalia is different from other African societies in crisis, given its fundamentally homogeneous character. There is no major religious divide, ethnic division or dispute over the allocation of wealth derived from natural resources. Rather, Somalia is a polity in crisis. It is divided on clan lines, with each clan fearful of the incursions of others. The violence, where it is not simple banditry, is mainly defensive in nature. The crucial missing

ingredient is trust. Without trust, there can be no peace or security in Somalia and no central government can be re-established.

65. While a negotiated settlement of Somalia's crisis has continued to be elusive, some important steps forward have been made. Two years ago, my then Special Envoy, Ismat Kittani, concluded that an essential pre-condition for political progress in Somalia was the development of a greater uniformity of approach on the part of the international community. Here, important progress has been made. In addition to the ambassadorial meeting, which meets in New York, the Standing Committee, which meets in the region, is already proving its worth as a forum for the exchange of information and assessments on the situation in Somalia. I believe that, as a result, the danger of a proliferation of initiatives, previously deplored by a number of Governments, has now been minimized. In particular, the ideas submitted by Djibouti, in its capacity as Chairman of IGAD, to the Standing Committee, on 29 July 1999, with the aim of speeding up the IGAD process, are in my view worthy of serious consideration.

66. Within Somalia itself, there is increasing evidence that ordinary Somalis are tired of violence and are pressuring their leaders to opt for peace. In the absence of any externally sponsored peace process since the Cairo meeting, Somalis are increasingly taking political initiatives themselves, through regional conferences, often organized by traditional leaders and informal cross-clan contacts. Civil society is beginning to make itself heard. Women's groups, in particular, have become much more active. At the same time, there has been increased criticism of the role of the Somali faction leaders.

67. Approximately half of Somali territory is peaceful. While struggles continue over control of some key southern towns, much of the day-to-day violence in Somalia is now criminal rather than political in origin. Indeed, a new challenge has presented itself: increasingly, the militias do not respond to the orders of clan leaders, but of local commanders only.

68. Many Somali leaders have informed the United Nations Political Office for Somalia that they would join a national meeting. Many Somalis have in mind the type of national reconciliation conference agreed upon in both the Sodere and Cairo agreements, i.e., a meeting of representatives of the major clan groups, plus minorities, to discuss future constitutional arrangements and the allocation of posts in a future national government. However, several Somali leaders have said that they believe that no progress is possible while Eritrea and Ethiopia continue to be at war and, in the view of such leaders, to involve Somali faction leaders in that war. The conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia is clearly having a highly adverse effect on the situation in Somalia. Reports of arms flows into Somalia, in contravention of the embargo established by Security Council resolutions 733 (1992), are deeply worrying. The United Nations Political Office for Somalia lacks the requisite mandate and capacity to verify these reports.

69. The task of re-establishing a functioning state in Somalia will require, then, not only an enormous effort of political will on the part of the Somali people and their leaders, a massive rebuilding operation will also be a necessary accompaniment of any peace process in Somalia. The two processes will

need to be carefully coordinated, with international support being carefully calibrated to reinforce those tendencies in Somali society that are working constructively together.

70. I believe that the stage has now been reached at which it may be appropriate for the United Nations to play an enhanced role in Somalia. I would propose that consideration should be given to action on two fronts. First, the United Nations, working impartially and objectively with interested member States, especially within the IGAD process, should do more to help bring about national unity and the restoration of a national government in Somalia. In this connection, the following steps could be considered: (a) as foreseen in my previous report, a general review of the role of the United Nations in Somalia, including the possible re-location of some United Nations programmes and agencies, as well as the Political Office, to Somalia; and, (b) the establishment of a trust fund for Somalia to provide financial support for the emerging process, for example for meetings by Somalia.

71. In addition, consideration might be given to whether, in advance of political agreements on the formation of a national government, action could be taken by the international community to assist Somalia to recover its sovereignty in certain limited fields, for example the protection of offshore natural resources. Efforts could also be made to limit the introduction of illegal arms and weapons into the country.

72. Other possibilities may exist in the area of developmental assistance. Although some development funds are reaching local administrations in Somalia, many international and national financial and donor institutions are required by their statutes to cooperate only with established state institutions, such as ministries of finance or central banks. It would be a challenge to the ingenuity of the international community to establish mechanisms which would allow financial assistance to flow into Somalia even before a formal central government and other institutions were re-established. I urge international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the European Development Fund, in administering the Lomé IV Convention, to exercise flexibility in this regard, re-examining as necessary their legal and financial arrangements to take this unique case into account.

Annex I

[Original: Arabic]

EFFORTS MADE BY THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES IN CONNECTION WITH THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA

1. At its last session, the one hundred and eleventh, the Council of the League of Arab States adopted its resolution 111/5846, in which it called upon the Somali parties to honour their agreements, to cooperate with the pan-Arab, regional and international efforts for national reconciliation, and to establish a national authority to restore the State of Somalia to its place in the international community, in the Arab family and in its regional setting as an effective State. Between the one hundred and eleventh and one hundred and twelfth sessions of the Council, the Secretary-General of the League received numerous Somali leaders, charged them with responsibility for the deteriorating situation in Somalia and urged them to place the interest of Somalia above all other considerations, to spare the Somali people further afflictions from war and divisiveness, to make the utmost effort to achieve the security, stability and national reconciliation that are critical to respect for and the maintenance of Somalia's sovereignty, and to avoid giving any pretexts for the violation of the country's territorial integrity by any outside forces.

2. Whether through its membership in the international standing committee on Somalia or through its direct contacts in the Somali arena and its regional and international relations, the secretariat of the League is endeavouring to achieve the following:

The compliance of all countries, and particularly the countries geographically contiguous to Somalia, with Security Council resolution 733 (1992) concerning the embargo on deliveries of weapons to Somalia; respect for Somali sovereignty; commitment to the territorial integrity of Somalia and its inviolability; the basic responsibility of the Somali leaders to keep their country aloof from conflicts between neighbouring States and, in particular, from the ongoing conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea;

Close cooperation with international and regional organizations and with the countries interested in the situation in Somalia with a view to reaching a consensus on modalities for helping the Somalis to resolve their dilemma and restore the institutions of the State so as to preserve Somalia's unity and territorial integrity;

A greater role for the United Nations in the Somali context and the assumption of its basic responsibilities for national reconciliation; the relocation of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) from Nairobi to Mogadishu for this purpose; and the provision of technical and humanitarian assistance to the Somali people by the United Nations through its specialized agencies;

The endeavour, in coordination with various international, regional and other organizations and with neighbouring States, to help the Somalis to convene a national reconciliation conference for the purpose of forming a unified Somali authority.

Annex II

Recent Developments in The IGAD Peace Process on Somalia

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
August 1999

Prepared for the United Nations

THE CHALLENGE OF SOMALIA

Following the overthrow of the Government of Siadh Barre at the beginning of 1991 and the expansion of the conflict in the country, Somalis have been living without a state. The civil war in Somalia has deeply aggravated the political, economic and humanitarian situation in the country, prompting a number of efforts, including a major UN operation in 1992/93, to address the crisis. To date, despite all the attempts made by neighboring states and others, Somalia remains a country without a state, and the Somalis, a people without a Government.

This state of affairs has had a disastrous effect on the life of the Somali people. Although in some parts of the country — in the northwest ("Somaliland") and northeast ("Puntland") there is relatively better security, some administration and social services — most of the rest of the country is in ruin. Although trade takes place, in addition to the general insecurity, living standards have dropped and even the provision of emergency assistance is threatened. The crisis has implications beyond Somalia's borders as well. Not only do neighboring countries bear the brunt of the socio-economic fallout from the Somali crisis, but they increasingly face the threat from organizations based on terror and destabilization that benefit from the absence of control in the stateless state of Somalia.

As a country sharing the longest border with Somalia hosting hundreds of thousands of Somali refugees and with a population of some 2.5 million Somali speaking citizens, Ethiopia was mandated by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to take the lead in helping the Somali people find peace and national reconciliation. Although a number of major national reconciliation conferences were held in the region, the lack of readiness by faction leaders to compromise and the inability of the international community to speak to the Somalis with one voice ensured that Somalia remained stateless and directionless for almost a decade.

The lack of progress to achieve peace and national reconciliation could be attributed to two factors which are interrelated:

1. The Somali faction leaders and warlords have not been ready to give up their personal interests for the sake of national reconciliation. The perpetuation of the status quo had been more profitable for them.
2. External actors, particularly from beyond the immediate sub-region have involved themselves in initiatives that run counter to the peace process undertaken by IGAD. The proliferation of initiatives has encouraged the Somali faction leaders to continue to play one external actor against the other in order to ensure that the status quo is maintained in the country.

It was in recognition of the stalemated peace process that the Heads of State of IGAD member states met in Djibouti on March 15 and 16, 1998 and resolved to undertake a new approach to the resolution of the Somali crisis.

THE "BUILDING BLOCK, PEACE - DIVIDEND" APPROACH

IGAD decided to broaden the peace process by shifting the emphasis from promoting concord between faction leaders towards enabling the greater participation of the Somali civil society in the interest of laying a more solid foundation for peace. In this regard the involvement of clan and religious leaders, elders, civic and social groups, non-governmental organization, intellectuals, the business community as well as women and youth groups was considered essential.

The IGAD leaders also resolved to expand international consultation and involve those who can contribute to the peace process as long as they do not engage in parallel and contradictory initiatives. They also called on the international community to politically, diplomatically and financially rehabilitate regions in the country where there is a commitment to peace, stability and national reconciliation (the 'peace dividend' approach).

As the mandated country, Ethiopia began to take steps to implement the new approach decided in Djibouti and known in more simple terms as the "building block, peace dividend approach". Efforts were made to try to develop better lines of communication with and between various actors/groups in Somalia, and to strengthen what was believed to be an emerging international consensus behind the IGAD peace process. In this regard, the sub-region was encouraged by the report issued in April 1998 by the United Nations Secretary General on conflict in Africa in which it was stated that, "it is desirable that the international community should strife to complement, rather than supplant African efforts to resolve Africa's problems".

Bringing the international community on board to back the IGAD peace initiative was facilitated by the establishment of the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF) Committee on Somali which met on May 4 and November 19, 1998. Attended by virtually all the countries and organizations that could play a role in bringing the Somalis to peace and national reconciliation, the meetings endorsed the new IGAD approach, warned those "hampering the peace process" and established a Liaison Group to interact on a more regular basis with IGAD. The Liaison Group was chaired by Italy and included the United States, Norway, France, Egypt, the European Commission and the United Nations. It was clear from the outset that the formation of the IPF did not represent a new and parallel initiative. Indeed the IPF's role was to work "in close consultation with existing coordinating structures to support the IGAD Peace Process and to consult on how best to mobilize the international community to assist the regional initiative".

EVERYONE UNDER ONE ROOF

As the process of international consultation gathered momentum, it was felt necessary to "bring everyone under one roof" within a forum of consultation and coordination that met more frequently and that suggested measures to push the IGAD peace process forward. The need prompted the establishment of the 'Standing Committee', in October 1998 in which were represented the IGAD countries, the member states of the IPF Liaison Group, the IGAD, OAU and Arab League Secretariats, Egypt, and Yemen. (Libya is also welcome to join the Standing Committee).

The Standing Committee quickly felt the need to link economic support and rehabilitation actions with the peace process; to enhance the problem solving capacities of those engaged in the peace process; to develop the criteria for the 'peace dividend', to mobilize funds; and to encourage Somali civil society. More than anything the Committee was an embodiment of a common international approach towards the Somali crisis although there were differences among a few committee members on a number of issues.

While serving as a forum which assisted the development of confidence between members, the Committee felt it was important to build a solid knowledge about the actual situation in Somalia. It believed important to assess the political base of the Somali actors, the place of civil society, and the identity of those Somali forces that would be part of the 'broadening of the peace process'. At the same time, the Committee understood the necessity to carry out evaluations/assessments by Somali and international experts regarding governance, community based initiatives, the work of NGO's, inter-clan relations, the role of the militias, the role of 'concerned parties', questions relating to private property and the issue of expropriated private property — with a focus to practically assist the Somalis and the international community to achieve results. One step taken in this regard involved the transfer of some information in the hands of the Somali Aid Coordinating Body to the IGAD Secretariat.

FINDING FACTS

In order to see the situation in Somalia at first hand the Standing Committee embarked on a fact-finding mission to the country during the first week of December 1998. It visited "Somliland" and "Puntland" two areas of relative stability. It could not visit Mogadiscio. The persistence of international differences in addition to the relationship between the administration and the armed opposition in the city ensured the cancellation of the mission to the capital.

Following the Fact Finding Mission, the Standing Committee agreed among other things on the need to continue to support "Somaliland" and "Puntland" as stable areas (particularly in infrastructure); to help strengthen local governance; to help returned refugees and demobilized persons and to try to bring the two administrations closer together (in view of their dispute over Sool and Sanaag).

PLUSES AND MINUSES

In addition the Standing Committee made some efforts through its members to have the Saudi ban on livestock exports from Somalia lifted. On various occasion stress was made on the need to observe the arms embargo on the transfer of weapons to Somalia instituted by the United Nations Security Council in 1992 (UNSC Res. 733/1992). More recently members have expressed their interest in seeking ways to speed up the peace process and, in this regard, looked at a new proposal tabled by Djibouti. It is also strongly believed that the peace dividend materialize and that current rehabilitation support actions be linked clearly with the peace process.

It must be said that the Standing Committee continues to demonstrate its use as a forum to strengthen international consensus behind the IGAD peace initiative and to generate ideas to help the peace process. On the other hand, however, the Committee has not seen success in mobilizing funds. Neither has membership in the committee meant that every country has avoided taking measures to exacerbate the situation in Somalia. But all things considered, the effort by most in the international community to work in a similar direction is encouraging and this has been recognized by both the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

The OAU, too, continues to be concerned with the continuing crisis in Somalia. The issue of Somalia is taken up at every Ministerial and Summit conference. Most recently in Algiers the OAU renewed its call from a year ago for a fact-finding mission to Somalia. It described the situation in the country as "deteriorating" and called for international assistance for those areas in which peace and stability have been established.

THE INFLUX OF ARMS

In recent months, those committed to peace in Somalia have been alarmed by the influx of arms into the country. The outbreak of conflict elsewhere in the Horn has resulted in a further complication in the Somali situation as arms destined to factions and groups having the objective of destabilizing neighboring countries have been introduced into Somalia. Such destructive activity can only encourage those receiving arms to opt for the military way out, thereby prolonging the resolution of the Somali crisis.

A letter outlining Ethiopia's grave concerns in this regard was submitted to the President of the United Nations Security Council on May 14, 1999, followed by a letter voicing similar concerns by the Djibouti Government on May 24, 1999. The arming of the groups that seek to destabilize the sub-region constitutes a threat to peace in Somalia and the neighborhood as a whole and firm reactions by neighboring states to safeguard their peace and security can only be expected. It is clear for all to see that the peace and stability of countries neighboring Somalia is inextricably linked to the reaching of a genuine and lasting political solution to the crisis in Somalia. It is, therefore, essential that the embargo on providing arms to Somalia be respected fully.

NEXT STEPS

Looking from the present to the future, it is obvious that a quick solution to the problems in Somalia will not be easy to achieve. Despite eight years of stateless existence, it can be said that Somalia is still not at a stage when the political situation is ripe for a quick solution.

Although there is relative stability in "Somaliland" and "Puntland" and more stability in parts of the south such as Bay and Bakool, the same cannot be said for other areas - notably Benadir (including the capital) and Lower Juba (including Kisimayo). It is essential for the peace process that in these areas the rival groups reach a 'local' accommodation. This would enable them to prepare at a second stage for countrywide efforts at national reconciliation. There is simply no alternative to the "bottom-up, peace-dividend" approach adopted by IGAD. The decisions taken by the IGAD Heads of State in Djibouti in March 1998 remain as relevant today as they were then. The fact that the IGAD approach advocates a political (and non-military) solution and is founded on the desires of the Somalis themselves, is further indication of the validity of the IGAD strategy.

The fact that the IGAD approach has not yielded quick results should not by any means be considered as failure. The crisis is not simple and has been going on for years. Some have vested interest in the prolongation of the crisis. Those concerned with the Somali problem will need to continue to grapple with the following questions:

- How can the Somali groups/actors come to a binding agreement? How can power be shared?
- Are the leaders representative of their communities?
- How do we encourage and assist the areas that have achieved peace, and how can others follow suit?
- How can the International community speak with one voice?

At the same time the peace process will have to help the Somalis address issues such as atrocities that have been committed, the confiscation of public and private properties, and illegal activities such as money-laundering, as well as arms and drug trafficking.

Equally of urgent concern is the need to ensure that the peace dividend materializes. There is no point in talking about the peace dividend if funds are not going to be available for the rehabilitation of Somalia. The lack of commitment by the international community on this matter is of great worry. Funds from the Lome Convention are running out and other sources of assistance are drying up for lack of interest. It is particularly important to remember that Somalia is not only facing a political crisis. Its people have been bearing the brunt of a humanitarian catastrophe and not for a short time. What is, therefore, of the essence is for the international community and the UN to get more firmly on board current efforts to bring peace and national reconciliation without giving up hope.